

Jersey Finger

Diagnosis Explanation:

Jersey finger is a **tear or rupture of the flexor digitorum profundus (FDP) tendon**, which allows the fingertip to bend. It commonly occurs when the **finger is forcefully extended while gripping**, such as when grabbing an opponent's jersey in sports.

Symptoms:

- **Inability to bend the fingertip** (DIP joint).
- **Pain, swelling, and bruising** on the palm side of the finger.
- **Tenderness along the flexor tendon.**
- **Possible lump (if the tendon retracts into the palm).**

Specific Work Modifications:

- **If your job involves typing or writing:** Use **voice dictation software** and take frequent breaks.
- **If your job requires manual labor:** Avoid **gripping tools or lifting heavy objects with the affected hand.**
- **If your job is desk-based:** Use an **ergonomic keyboard and wrist support**, and keep the **hand elevated** when possible.
- **Avoid:** Forceful gripping, repetitive finger use, and tasks that put strain on the affected finger.

Specific Activity Modifications:

- **If you play sports:** Avoid **gripping-heavy sports (football, rugby, rock climbing, weightlifting)** until cleared for return.
- **If you play an instrument or do crafting:** Use **adaptive tools with larger grips** to reduce strain.
- **If you do gardening or cooking:** Use **ergonomic tools** and avoid forceful pinching motions.
- **Avoid:** Activities that require **strong grip strength, pulling motions, or excessive finger flexion.**

Recommended Supplements:

- **Collagen Peptides** - 10g daily for tendon repair.
- **Vitamin C** - 500mg daily to support collagen synthesis.
- **Glucosamine & Chondroitin** - 1500mg/1200mg daily for joint and tendon health.
- **Omega-3 Fatty Acids** - 1000mg daily to reduce inflammation.
- **Turmeric (Curcumin)** - 500-1000mg daily for pain relief.

Recommended Nutrition and Hydration:

- **Increase Lean Protein** (chicken, fish, tofu, eggs) to support tendon healing.
- **Eat Anti-Inflammatory Foods** (berries, leafy greens, turmeric, nuts) to reduce swelling.
- **Consume Hydrating Foods** (cucumber, watermelon, citrus) to maintain tendon lubrication.
- **Limit Processed Foods & Sugars** to prevent inflammation.
- **Hydration:** Drink **8-10 cups of water daily** to support tendon recovery.

Home Exercise Prescription (Rehabilitation for Jersey Finger)

Early Phase (0-2 Weeks, Protecting the Tendon & Reducing Pain):

- **Splinting** - Wear a **DIP extension splint full-time** to prevent further damage.
- **RICE Protocol** - Rest, Ice (15-20 min, 3x/day), Compression, Elevation.
- **Passive Finger Flexion** - Use the opposite hand to **gently bend the fingertip, 10 reps, 2x/day**.

Strengthening Phase (2-6 Weeks, Restoring Mobility & Function):

- **Towel Scrunches** - Place a towel on a flat surface, use fingers to scrunch it, **10 reps, 2x/day**.
- **Finger Lifts** - Place hand flat, lift each finger individually, **10 reps per finger, 2x/day**.
- **Rubber Band Finger Extensions** - Wrap a rubber band around fingers, open hand against resistance, **10 reps, 2x/day**.

Advanced Phase (6+ Weeks, Preventing Recurrence & Maintaining Function):

- **Grip Strengthening (Soft Ball Squeeze)** - Squeeze a soft ball **5 seconds, repeat 10 reps, 2x/day**.
- **Finger-to-Thumb Opposition** - Touch thumb to each fingertip, **10 reps, 2x/day**.
- **Wrist Strengthening (Light Resistance Band)** - Strengthen wrist and forearm muscles to prevent re-injury, **10 reps, 2x/day**.

Helpful Books:

1. *The Hand and Wrist Pain Solution: Simple Exercises for Relief* - Dr. Ross Clifford.
2. *Arthritis and Hand Therapy: A Self-Help Guide to Managing Joint Pain* - Susan J. Barnhart, PT.

Click here for more orthopedic patient information.

Contact a Key West orthopedic clinic or reach out to Dr. Jason Pirozzolo.